

Canadian Preparations for the International Polar Year 2007-2008

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The upcoming IPY is an outstanding opportunity for researchers to participate in an international, concerted and synergistic campaign launching a broad suite of projects in natural science, social science, humanities, community outreach and education. Canadian researchers and their international collaborators from universities, northern communities, and governments have been working closely to develop integrated and innovative research programs. Specifically, the Canadian geomatics community is providing international leadership in developing an on-line Polar Atlas to make IPY activities and results accessible for education and outreach initiatives as well as in hosting a conference to facilitate the international sharing of expertise, activities and techniques and to seek commitment around a common precision geospatial infrastructure. Such opportunities will contribute to strengthening and establishing a legacy of northern research capacity across the country, and especially in the North.

Recognizing that Canada has a critical role to play in IPY as host, leader and participant, preparations in Canada have been extensive. A network of national, territorial, and regional organizing bodies has been established to coordinate the development of the national IPY research and education programs; to support the financial, logistical and operational planning; as well as to facilitate the advancement of international research partnerships. The success of the Canadian IPY program, measured as either capacity building, strength of partnerships, or efficiency of logistics and operations, will depend upon having committed and capable people in northern Canada who are specifically part of the Canadian IPY effort. The most recently established partner in the network is the 'northern nodes' which are regional organizations that facilitate the involvement of northerners in the design, development, support, and dissemination of IPY research. The nodes will provide a strong focus on producing research results for the long-term benefits of Canada's Northern population, including lasting collaborative research networks, sustained Northern research engagement, new skills and new ways of approaching Northern issues, and the encouragement of a new generation of Northern researchers.